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KAZAKHSTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Awareness Creates Healthy Communities

Training and information help reduce arterial hypertension



Dr. Klavdiya Kim and Proskovya Melihova demonstrate how to correctly measure blood pressure.
Photo: Anel Kulakhmetova, Counterpart International

“I regularly self-check my blood pressure, eat healthy food, and simply feel healthy,” said Proskovya. “Moreover, now we can go see our doctors and be sure they will prescribe a right medicine and give a right advice.”

Proskovya Melihova, a 69-year-old resident of Ust’ Kamenogorsk in eastern Kazakhstan, has struggled with arterial hypertension for years. She is not alone in her struggle — as many as 105 members of her small community have had health problems caused by hypertension, a condition that can lead to cardiac infarction and strokes. Not surprisingly, its widespread incidence has made it a priority health issue, exacerbated by low public awareness and lack of prevention skills among local medical workers.

USAID is aiming to reduce fatal complications of arterial hypertension by supporting a series of training activities and public information campaigns.

High demand has already resulted in 21 USAID-funded training workshops for 460 medical workers and hypertension patients on the most effective and up-to-date methods of

prevention and treatment. A hotline service was also set up to give residents access to consultations from medical professionals on hypertension and relevant diseases. Additionally, a public service announcement on how to measure arterial pressure was broadcast by the local TV station Kalken, and other local stakeholders, including the local Mix Radio, Didar Newspaper, and Center for Healthy Family Lifestyles, also contributed to the campaign.

After attending the training, Proskovya said, “Now I know that there are so many effective ways to deal with arterial hypertension... I regularly self-check my blood pressure, eat healthy food, and simply feel healthy. Moreover, now we can go see our doctors and be sure they will prescribe a right medicine and give a right advice.”

Six months after the project ended, the Health Department found that the number of urgent calls for ambulances from patients with heart disease had decreased by 30-percent, and the number of sick-leave days among them decreased by 25-percent.